

Solicitation Number: SCC060001-A1

Statewide Research and Survey Services

Category 3.4.6.7. Survey Purposes—Needs Assessment

Solicitation Due Date:
September 30, 2005

Submitted to:
Strategic Contracting Centers
100 N. 15th Ave., Suite 104
Phoenix, Arizona 85007



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Experience and Expertise—3.4.6.7. Survey Purposes. Needs Assessment

Overview of Experience and Expertise

LeCroy & Milligan Associates, Inc. (LMA) has the breadth of experience and a service philosophy that is well suited to the variety of services requested in the solicitation. For the past 14 years, LeCroy & Milligan Associates has provided research, evaluation, planning and training services for state, federal and local agencies in a variety of project areas.

The combined personnel of our organization provide a unique balance of individuals that have the analytical, statistical, and substantive expertise to respond to the demands of the RFP and produce exceptional consultation and project services. Project teams are formed to include staff members whose unique experience is most needed by a particular project.

Our staff comprise a multi-disciplinary team with professional backgrounds in psychology, social work, public health, juvenile justice, education, public administration, family studies, and management information systems. Our staff's backgrounds include *direct* program development and administrative experience as well as *consultation* in research. This experience enables us to understand the *practical and practice* issues involved in human services. Also, our work is not dependent on one person but rather involves an entire team to provide the service or product. This provides clients with additional assurance that our work will be completed in a timely and efficient manner.

We have a staff of 21 full-time and 2 part-time employees that work efficiently and effectively in designing and carrying out research, planning, and consultation projects. Because we use a team approach in our work, the burden does not fall exclusively on one evaluator to complete work, and thus we can be efficient and timely in our work. Our team includes:

- 1 President/Evaluator, MSSW
- 1 Executive Director/Evaluator, PhD
- 5 Evaluation Associates, Master's Degrees and PhDs
- 3 Evaluation Specialists, BA
- 1 Computer Systems Manager, BS
- 1 Business/Operations Manager
- 3 Data Entry Specialists
- 7 Quality Assurance & Training Team Members, 3 Master's Degrees

LeCroy & Milligan Associates maintains a well-established office in Tucson, Arizona. The offices are connected with a local area computer network with state-of-the-art word processing equipment, and use Microsoft products, SPSS, Epi-Info, ArcView GIS mapping software, and Dreamweaver software. We also have access to large mainframe computers when needed. Our computer and personnel capacity and experience allows us to process and enter large data sets if needed. Our office has a conference room available for meeting and training when needed. We have a large library of evaluation, prevention and training materials. We have two fax machines to receive documentation and we are available by phone, fax, or email.

Our staff have access to numerous on-line and library resources for reference needs. We have DSL Internet connections with virus and security protection updated regularly. We maintain three websites and regularly post reports, written materials, training materials, and relevant links. We have developed a web platform for training modules used nationally. We use Dreamweaver software for creating secure web-based access for online data collection.

Experience and expertise in Needs Assessment Surveys

LeCroy & Milligan Associates has strong experience in developing and conducting survey research and studies for needs assessments. Some projects are highlighted below.

Nevada “Real Choices” Systems Change grant Needs Assessment of Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN). In this 2004 study LMA conducted several surveys and studies to formulate a comprehensive report of needs and resources for the state of Nevada, including:

- *On-line and paper surveys of Nevada’s medical providers* to provide information on their perception of CSHCN and their families
- *Surveys and focus groups with parents* regarding their perceptions about availability and accessibility of services, most valued resources, barriers to services, and suggestions for improvement in services
- *inventories of all currently available government agency resources* for CSHCN throughout Nevada among state, county, and municipal service providers (including financial assistance programs, developmental services, direct services, and educational services)
- *inventories of private and nonprofit community resources, activities, and services, all mental health providers, all advocacy groups* available in each geographic area of the State by county
- *an inventory of service gaps*, including transportation in each geographic area
- *surveys of provider availability* in each geographic area (general medical, medical specialty, and physical/speech/occupational therapists) by county
- *socioeconomic breakdown of CSHCN* and their families and a quantitative description charting and/or graphing their geographical location within the state.

Key Staff: Allison Titcomb, Pat Canterbury, April Hizny, Kerry Milligan

In our Altar Valley State Incentive Grant evaluation (2000-2003) we worked closely with the Community Substance Abuse Advisory Committee which is comprised of school staff, community members (parents and youth) and behavioral health providers, to develop and implement a needs assessment regarding services and needs during after school time. Our staff worked closely with this group in the survey design and interpretation of results. This information was instrumental in subsequent grant applications and strategic planning for school and community activities.

Key Staff: Allison Titcomb, Kerry Milligan

Pima County Juvenile Probation evaluation. This one-year study completed in 2003, was a multi-method study examining the effectiveness of Juvenile Probation services. It included three large-scale telephone surveys with victims, family members and the general public regarding perceptions of the department’s effectiveness, a comprehensive literature review of juvenile

treatment approaches, a single system design study with probation officers, and a recidivism study requiring mining of the JOLTS (Juvenile On-Line Tracking System). The study pinpointed needs of youth as well as crime victims in Pima County.

Key Staff: Craig LeCroy, subcontractor Dennis Palumbo, Ph.D. and FMR Associates, Inc.

OASIS Center for Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence program evaluation (University of Arizona) (2002-03). During this two-year project we developed and conducted focus groups and key informant interviews to survey and assess the needs and perceptions of the Center among “consumers” and community collaborators. The needs assessment information was used to improve collaboration among providers as well as services within the Center.

Key Staff: Allison Titcomb, Kerry Milligan

Maternal Health Report: Analysis of Focus Groups Among Women Who Received Inadequate Prenatal Care. (2001) This project was designed for the Pima County Health Department to investigate why some women fail to use adequate prenatal care. We designed focus group discussion guides for use with both consumers and service providers to explore the reasoning behind their prenatal health decision-making and how services were accessed. The study revealed specific needs particularly evident among Hispanic women, which was used for county planning.

Key Staff: Kerry Milligan, Craig LeCroy

Two other Pima County projects involved researching the needs of particular population groups, namely homeless youth in Tucson. Project Contact: Access to a Pediatric Home for the Homeless Focus Group Study (2002) included focus groups as the main source of data collection to gather information about health care needs from homeless youth. In 2004-2005, we conducted a project for the Tucson Planning Council for the Homeless, with surveys and key informant interviews with homeless youth and providers regarding their understanding of and access to a variety of community services. The needs assessment information is being used by the planning council for recommendations to the city and county regarding homeless youth.

Key Staff: Hilary Smith, Allyson LaBrue, Craig LeCroy

United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona, Youth Development Project Survey (2005).

LeCroy & Milligan Associates is conducting needs assessment activities with the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona to assist the United Way Impact Councils with strategic program planning. One of these projects is the Youth Development Survey, a telephone survey of 900 youth and parents in Pima County regarding after-school time. Under this contract, we meet regularly with council directors and community volunteers to formulate needs assessment plans for four impact areas: after-school care for youth, domestic violence programs, basic needs services, and senior care providers.

Key Staff: Allison Titcomb, Pat Canterbury, April Hizny, subcontractor FMR Associates, Inc.

References

1) Client Organization/Contact person

Nevada Department of Health Services

Debra Wagler, Health Program Manager for Real Choices Systems Change Project

Bureau of Family Health Services

3427 Goni Road, Suite 108

Carson City, NV 89706

Phone: 775-684-3479

Project Description

Nevada Needs Assessment of Children with Special Health Care Needs. A statewide needs assessment regarding availability and accessibility of community based services for children and their families.

Project Dates: August 2004-June 2005

2) Client Organization/Contact person

United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona

Dan Duncan, Vice President, or LaVonne Douville, FFK Impact Director

Phone: (520) 903-9000

Project Description: Consultation with *United Way Impact Councils*. LMA staff work as contracted consultants to three Impact Councils to provide technical assistance in needs assessments, grant development, strategic planning, and evaluation.

Project Dates: 11/03- present

2) Client Organization/Contact person

Tomas' Leon, Executive Director

Youth on Their Own

Tucson, Arizona

Phone: 520-293-1136

Project Description: *Homeless youth survey* for the Tucson Planning Council for the Homeless. Surveys, focus groups, interviews to assess needs of homeless youth and conduct strategic planning.

Project Dates: September 2004-present

Resumes of key personnel

Resumes of the following key LeCroy & Milligan Associates staff are attached.

Kerry Milligan, MSSW

Craig LeCroy, Ph.D.

Allison Titcomb, Ph.D.

Pat Canterbury, MPH

April Hizny, BA

Jen Kozik, MPH

Hilary Smith, MA

Cindy Jones BA, MIS

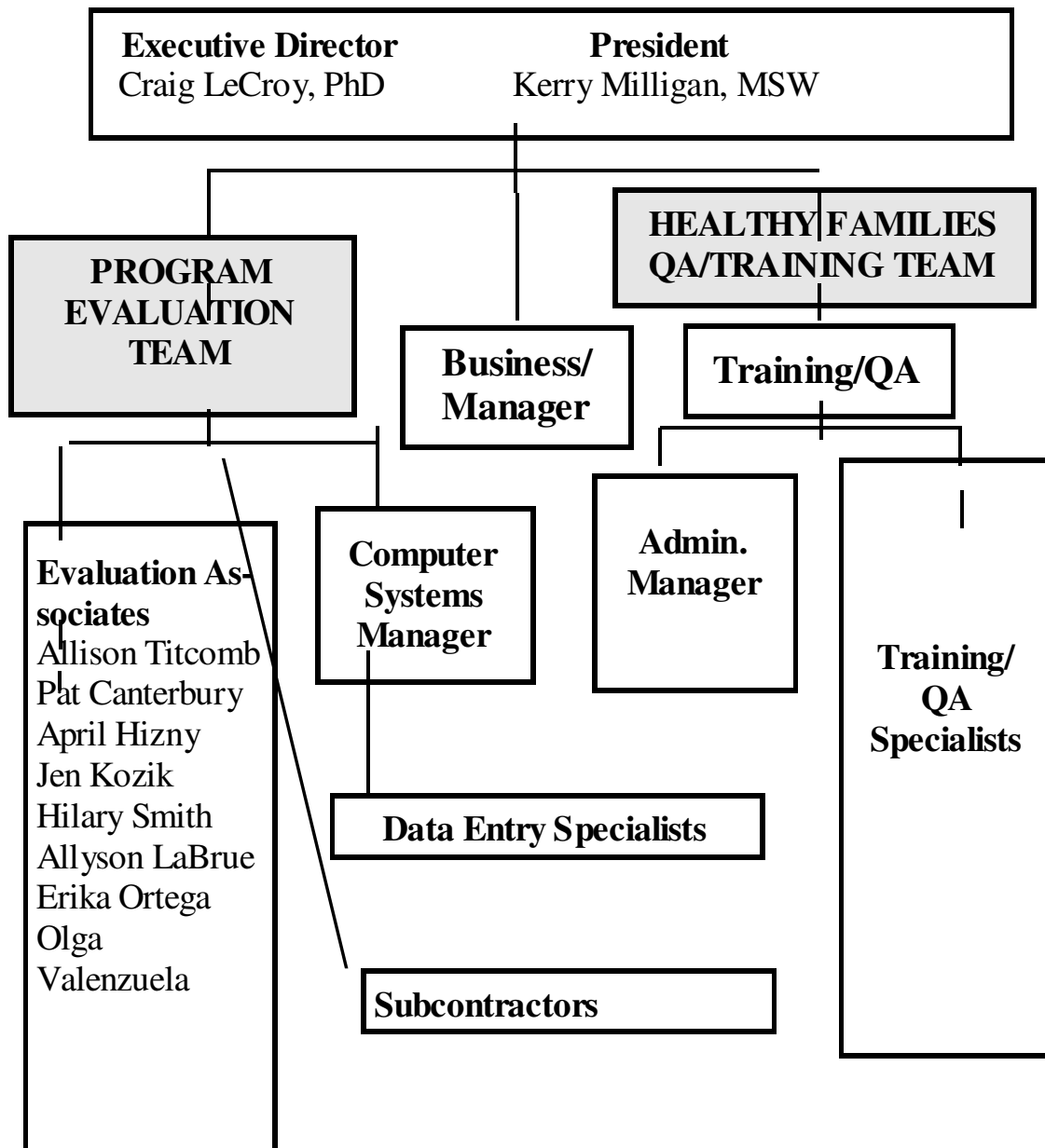
Allyson LaBrue. BA
Erika Ortega, BA
Olga Valenzuela. BA

Potential Subcontractors:

- FMR Associates, Inc. Tucson, Arizona. Founded in 1981, FMR Associates, Inc. specializes in strategic research for the communications industry. We have used them for random-digit dial telephone surveys.
- Judy Krysik, Ph.D.

LeCroy & Milligan Associates, Inc.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Note: The Project team leader is chosen from evaluators for each project, and supervises the project.

Method of Approach—3.4.6.7. Survey Purposes—Needs Assessment

Survey planning and design

LeCroy & Milligan Associates (LMA) has developed, conducted and analyzed numerous surveys to gather information from different populations. LMA determines the variables of interest in the survey project through a comprehensive team approach, which includes the stakeholders' input and feedback. We work to identify the stakeholders' most important variables of interest, because they will be the focus for measurement. Inevitably, there are limited resources for survey work. A key to an efficient survey research project is to focus on the most important variables to measure, and to measure them well.

LeCroy & Milligan Associates develops and administers surveys in a variety of methods, including phone, on-line or web-based, mail, paper and pencil, focus groups or face-to-face interviews. Surveys may be used to gather information about behaviors, attitudes, or knowledge that is then used for needs assessment, program development, evaluation, and/or to obtain reactions to services and products. LMA will use a systematic process to design, develop and execute the survey research tools and instruments with the objectives of maximizing survey validity and reliability. The proposed steps in this process include:

1. The selection of a team of LeCroy & Milligan personnel and/or potential subcontractors based on specific survey research expertise (e.g., experience with the target group, survey design expertise, sampling design, formatting specialists, data analysis).
2. The designated lead evaluator will coordinate an organizational meeting with the client to exchange ideas about the project needs, methods and instruments. The initial steps of survey design include a careful examination of the goals and objectives and underlying logic of the project, and a literature review to help define the “state of the art” methods for measuring the issues or concepts of interest. In addition we gather existing instruments that may be designed to measure the areas of interest and determine if items may be adopted with permissions or adapted in the new survey instruments. We also attempt to review currently existing data sources to avoid duplication of effort and to build on existing knowledge. For example, in Arizona and nationally, there have been several surveys of substance abuse and other risk behaviors among youth, and our review of those efforts helped to inform the survey design in the Abstinence Only program evaluation we conducted for the Department of Health Services (1998-2003).
3. The LMA team would then adapt or create the survey questionnaires or instruments. The instruments would be translated into Spanish or other languages if needed.
4. The LMA team would pretest and further revise the questionnaire based on feedback. If time and resources allow, one method we have found useful in pilot-testing an instrument is the method of cognitive interviewing (Fowler, 1995). Basically, cognitive interviewing involves asking selected individuals the survey questions, then probing with follow-up questions to learn how individuals understand the question, and what their answers mean to them. In pretesting the instrument, we attempt to get a representative sample of the target group in terms of geographic centers, age, ethnicity, gender, etc. Depending on the target group characteristics, a small monetary incentive might be provided to each participant. The survey participants are asked to think aloud as they formulate their

responses to the survey questions. Comments from the participants completing the pretest will be recorded. Particular attention would be given to individual's response to the language of the survey (questions and response categories), time to complete the questionnaire, and ease of completion. The pretest process will also allow pretesting the instructions for completion. After completion of the questionnaire, the participants might be asked questions in a group format, including their sincerity in answering the questions, suggestions for alternative wording, etc. The survey questions will be revised based on the pretest results. LeCroy & Milligan Associates will prepare a fully refined version of the survey, including instructions for administration. The revisions must be made keeping in mind the objectives of decreasing response error and increasing respondent motivation.

5. Final input on the draft survey questionnaire and administration protocol would be sought from client; revisions on English and Spanish (or other languages if needed) versions will be made accordingly.
6. Once the final survey is completed, the format would be executed, for example, hard copy survey, scannable test booklets, phone interview guide, on-line survey, or email survey.
7. Prior to administration (phone, online, mail), quality assurance processes to insure data integrity would include data collection protocol manuals, training data collection staff, outlining the data tracking and monitoring systems and data cleaning procedures.
8. Depending on the size of the project, shortly after data collection begins we conduct quality checks on the integrity of the data gathered.
9. Analyze the data
10. Share and use the results

For each project, we select a team of at least two LeCroy & Milligan Associates staff to coordinate the research project, design a data collection and data analysis plan. The project manager will then tap our other staff as needed for selected tasks; for example, our Evaluation Assistant may complete a series of phone interviews, or site visits to collect survey data. A senior evaluator may be tapped to complete some complex data analysis if needed, and our Computer Systems Manager, skilled in data base development, may be tapped to create databases, manipulate data sets and so on. If needed, we would subcontract some telephone surveying to FMR Associates, Inc.

Several of our projects have included specific components to gather health related information for identified communities. After meeting with the client and a cross section of community stakeholders, the study plan is drafted and reviewed. As described in the section above, we use a step-by-step approach to designing and implementing the survey or study. For example in our 2002 needs assessment survey of the Three Points, Arizona community, the community substance abuse advisory board was interested in learning about the health and well-being of children during after-school hours and problems experienced by families in that area. After specific research questions were generated, a survey was designed and implemented to gather information about this specific geographic area. We also examined secondary source data from the juvenile probation department regarding risk behaviors of youth in this area. The results were analyzed and reported to the advisory board that then used this information to develop grants and action plans for after-school prevention programs.

For many projects demographic data can be collected, compiled and analyzed by geographic area. Using software such as ArcView or Excel, the data can be represented in graphical form with maps or charts, depending on the clarity of the method for communicating the pattern of the socioeconomic variables to be displayed. For example, if there are large differences by county or by region within a county, a map could effectively “tell” that story. If the socioeconomic breakdown is more complicated and related to variables other than geography (e.g., presence of specific advocacy groups), then charting by variable category may be more appropriate.

Socioeconomic breakdowns have been reported in a number of evaluation reports completed by LeCroy & Milligan Associates. Each of our contracts with the Arizona Department of Economic Security (e.g., statewide assessments of such programs as Health Families, Family Builders, Family Group Decision Making, Family Preservation/Family Support) have included details about household income, poverty rates, employment and education, and family composition. The ability to assess these indicators will depend on available data from state agencies and the ability to survey families who currently receive services.

Samples

Often in survey research the development and application of the sample design are essential to ensure that the data are collected accurately. LMA proposes to use the experience of their in-house team of research specialists, informed by the expertise of a statistical sampling expert if needed.

Sampling of survey participants depends on the scope and research questions for the survey project. LMA can use sampling techniques for estimating and obtaining adequate representation of the population that is necessary for detecting significant differences among the outcomes of interest. Our staff have expertise in conducting power analysis for estimating the sample size needed for various types of survey study designs.

When determining samples, LMA also considers the demographics of the target population and prevalence rates for the social or health problem that the program is trying to assess. For example, over-sampling of certain groups may be employed in order to adequately represent a small but crucial group that is targeted for the needs assessment, such as high-risk populations, or ethnic groups that are vulnerable to a particular social problem.

Some of the types of sampling we have conducted include multistage probability sampling, purposive sampling, computer generated randomly drawn samples, and cluster sampling. The details of the sample design include definition of the population, identification of subpopulations and detailed sampling procedures. Selection of the sample would be drafted and revised in consultation with the client.

Prepare reports, and make recommendations

A report to summarize survey results for needs assessment can be very useful information for planning and grant development purposes. LeCroy & Milligan Associates’ general approach to report writing is to understand and respond to the information needs of the audience for the

report. This will determine the scope and format of the report. We have written reports that vary in their technical nature, and sometimes, we produce several reports for one project that address different audiences. For example, we may write a comprehensive main report, and then we may produce a short report or executive report for policy-makers and the public. In other cases, we have written both a technical report, which specifically details the analytic results, and a report for lay audiences that only summarizes and interprets the findings. Our report formats are usually provided in both print and electronic versions.

In general, our reports typically include all of the following components:

- ☐ a description of the methodology used in the project
- ☐ a description of the limitations and challenges of the study and research design
- ☐ how we constructed the sample and demographic characteristics of the sample
- ☐ the major questions or issues addressed in the study
- ☐ the statistical analysis approach and results, including confidence intervals
- ☐ the major findings
- ☐ recommendations or implications for the program or issue area.

Reports, data summaries and other documents are prepared by the lead researcher and go through an extensive review process by other evaluators and the company principals.

Background Information/Work Samples

Examples of reports and projects can be found on our website, www.lecroymilligan.com, for example:

- *Nevada Needs Assessment of Children with Special Health Care Needs—final report*
- *Executive Summary of the Pima County Juvenile Probation evaluation, 2003*
- *Homeless Youth Systems Change Initiative (PowerPoint presentation)*